

The ADA

What it Means 28 Years Later

July 2018



GEORGIA VOCATIONAL
REHABILITATION AGENCY

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Celebrating the ADA

By Executive Director Sean T. Casey



When we think of the Civil Rights Movement, many of us default to thoughts of the brave men and women who advocated, protested, marched, and bore the brunt of much abuse during the tumultuous 60s. A

large number of people in today's workforce can only imagine, from archival black and white film, photographs in a textbook, or the stories of friends and loved ones, what it was like to live during those years.

The Civil Rights Movement for people with disabilities started later and continues today. The signing of the Americans with Disabilities Act on July 26, 1990, by President George H.W. Bush, didn't solve all the challenges individuals face, but it did catapult the disability community into the headlines and the public consciousness. Modeled after the Civil Rights Act of 1964, the Act's authors wisely left some parts of the language broad, leaving latitude for cultural and societal advances like the slow erosion of stigma surrounding mental illness.

In fact, language from the ADA's very first section encapsulates well the spirit of our mission at the Georgia Vocational Rehabilitation Agency (GVRA). It reads, "The Congress finds that physical or mental disabilities in no way diminish a person's right to fully participate in all aspects of society." At GVRA, our sole purpose is to serve and support peoples' pursuits of fulfilling lives through integrated careers

and living independence. The Georgia Employment First Act, which passed during the 2018 legislative session, carries on in the spirit of the ADA. Put quite simply, Employment First is based upon the principle that, regardless of disability, all people have the right to receive education and information on the full range of available government services, with employment offered as the first option for those who choose to go to work.

It is also worth noting the function of employment as a gateway to numerous other aspects of society, including financial freedom and social inclusion. I am reminded of a young man who presented at last year's TASH conference, hosted in Atlanta. This gentleman, who lived with cognitive disabilities, left a non-integrated environment for a regular job with equal pay. Between a string of sessions he helped to present, he received a phone call from his boss, who was checking in to ask if he was enjoying his travels. This call meant a great deal to him, he said, because it was a reminder that he was recognized, valued, and missed.

As we reflect on the ADA's anniversary later this month, we are reminded there is still work to be done. Attitudinal barriers as well as physical ones still exist, and education to combat those barriers is not just the job of people with disabilities. The job belongs to all of us, because integrated, competitive workplaces benefit all of us, both culturally and economically. At GVRA, we are blessed with the support of our Governor, our legislators, many business partners, and stakeholders throughout the state. I personally thank you for all each of you do every day to expand opportunity for those we have the distinct privilege of serving.



Get to Know a Legislator

This Month We Feature Tommy Benton

By Rep. Tommy Benton



School System from 1974-2004 and taught all middle school subjects except math at one time or another during my career. My area of concentration was Georgia History, which I taught for 30 years, but I also taught American history and world studies. I taught at Maysville Elementary, Jackson County Middle School and East Jackson Middle School. I was also employed by McDonald Hardware in Commerce from 1975-2011 on a part-time basis.

Since 1962 I have been an active member of the First United Methodist Church in Commerce. I have always felt that people should give back to their community, so to further that idea, I became a Hunter Safety Instructor, member and later chairman of the Jefferson Historic Preservation Commission and Treasurer of the Jackson County Bicentennial Commission.

Since taking office in 2005, I have tried to do to the best of my ability to serve the interest of the district. In doing so I have been placed on several House committees and I currently serve as Chairman of the Human Relations and Aging Committee, Secretary of the Education Committee, and as a member of Appropriations, Retirement, Rules and Transportation committees. I am also a member of the Georgia Rural Caucus, which is made up of Representatives and Senators from rural areas of the State. This caucus discusses legislation that would affect the rural areas of the state.

I am a lifelong, 6th-generation resident of Jackson County. My wife, Karen, and I have four children and two grandchildren and live in Jefferson.

I grew up in Commerce and attended the Commerce School System, graduating from Commerce High School in 1968. I then attended West Georgia College from 1968-1972 earning an AB in History. I later earned a MEd in Middle School Education from Brenau College in 1983.

I was employed by the Jackson County



GIB Celebrates the ADA

Pictures From the Celebration



ABOVE: GIB Co-Director Luis Narimatsu and GVRA Legislative Liaison Charlie Miller speak at Georgia Industries for the Blind's annual ADA celebration.

BELOW: Charlie Miller helps serve food at the celebration.



A Meaningful Career

Dale Arnold Retires After 31 Years

By Communications and Marketing Director Robin Folsom

Perhaps the first sign that Dale Arnold would have a unique career with the state of Georgia was his unusual start date: 8-8-88.

As a young professional, he excitedly accepted a job with the Department of Family and Children's Services as a Child and Adolescent Counselor, and his new boss expected him in training almost immediately. For nine years, he invested his heart and soul into his work with youth going through difficult circumstances, but as it turned out, that career wasn't the end game.

In 1997, Dale heard of an opening in Vocational Rehabilitation (VR), then housed under the Department of Human Resources (DRH). He wanted the job, pursued it, and got it. "From the minute I started with VR, I knew I was home," he said. But there was one problem.

"When I started, I needed neck surgery, and I knew it would take about six weeks to recover. I don't even remember if I had that much time built up, but either way, it had to happen," Dale reminisced. "I remember the day I went to my supervisor to let her know, and I went to the men's room first. I was washing my hands, and looked myself in the eye, and I said, 'Dale, you're about to get fired.'"

Of course, his fears didn't materialize. His supervisor was both understanding and compassionate, and as he became embedded in the work of VR, she became a mentor and role model to him.

"Ann Heeth was a Rehabilitation Unit

Manager then," Dale said. "She was very policy-driven, procedure-driven, and she understood our mission and our goals. She taught me not just to understand what the policies were, but why they were in place to help the clients."

He said Ann's philosophies helped shape his own, particularly when she supervised him again as a member of the VR Policy Unit. The most important concept Dale learned from her leadership was that staff in administration should always remember their purpose is to be a resource to the field.

Over the years, Dale held a number of roles and excelled in a variety of areas. He has been a Certified Rehabilitation Counselor (CRC), a Rehabilitation Unit Manager (RUM), a Policy Appeals Advisor, Regional Director, Director of Operations, Field Services Director, and Director of Transition.

Over the years, even after becoming Chief Client Management Officer, he always completed the requirements to maintain his certification.

Though Dale spent 21 years with VR, one colleague, current Director of Transition Lauri Tuten, knew him from a past position. "I worked with Dale as a peer for several years, and then he moved to Policy assigned to the South Region," Lauri explained. "He assumed the role of Regional Director for Region 7, and for the first time, out of all of the years I knew and worked with him, he became my supervisor. As a matter of fact, he beat me out for the RD job," she laughs.



"Dale is so much fun to work with, because he has a sense of humor but is also innovative. He has made a real impact on me. I am so thankful for his leadership style: asking his team for advice, providing support when we need it, and pushing us to come up with our own solutions. Under his leadership, my confidence has grown immensely, and other people have noticed too," Lauri said.

Julie O'Connor, Assistant VR Director for the East, also has nearly a 20 year friendship with Dale. "We've had some fantastic times over the years. From working together on client cases to special projects, he always keeps the clients and the VR program first. His drive and commitment just don't waiver."

Just as Dale followed his mentor and first VR Supervisor into policy, present and past policy staff view him as a mentor. In 2002, he hired Jennifer Howell, who is now a Policy Appeals Manager. When asked about her boss's best trait, she quickly replied, "Integrity." She says he also reminds his team that the clients deserve no less than everyone's best.

VR Director Lauren Knox fondly remembers meeting Dale in his policy role. "I used to be scared of the Policy folks before I met Dale, just because their job requires them to review your cases. And then they tell you what you did wrong," she laughs. "He changed the way I think about policy, and leadership as a whole. He doesn't just issue orders; he explains why we're doing things the way we're doing things."

When asked if he had any regrets over his 31-year career, Dale paused to think. "Well, sure, but I choose not to focus on anything but the positive. We really have a unique opportunity in VR. We're not just pushing paper around. This work matters to real people," he said. "And the clients, people who have disabilities, are exactly like people without disabilities. Our clients want to

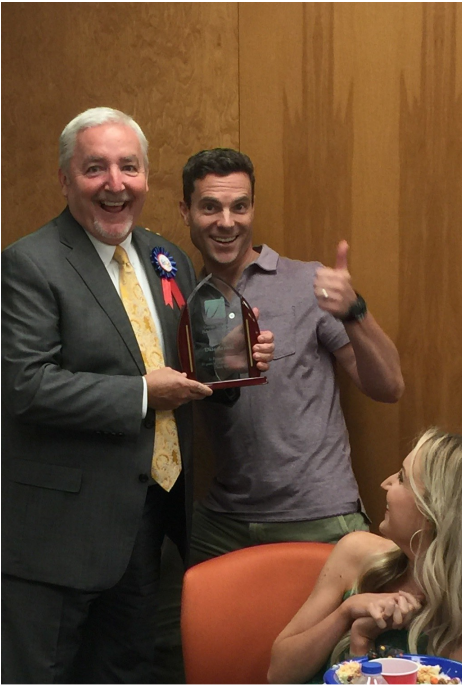
make money, support themselves, have health insurance, families, friends. Everyone deserves the opportunity to make that happen for themselves."

He also shared his unique lense on employing people with disabilities. "People think we're doing some big thing, some great thing, and yes, our staff are amazing people who work hard. But sending someone to work... it's usually really easy on the employer. First of all, they get a good candidate. We make sure we send them someone qualified. Second, if there happen to be any accommodations to make, so what? We make accommodations all day, for everyone. For example, people can't see in the dark. So we wire buildings with electricity and put in lighting. That's an accommodation. It's really that easy."

As he transitions from a decades-long career, Dale says he has his priorities straight. His daughter recently married, adding a new son-in-law to the family, and his son and daughter-in-law recently made him a grandfather. He also admits he has a significant to do list around his home in Harlem, Georgia. "Oh, yeah," he said. "It's amazing how things build up. Now, it's no more excuses!"

On Friday, May 22nd, Dale's colleagues and friends came together at GVRA's Augusta office to honor his service. These photographs on the next page were shared by Jennifer Howell.



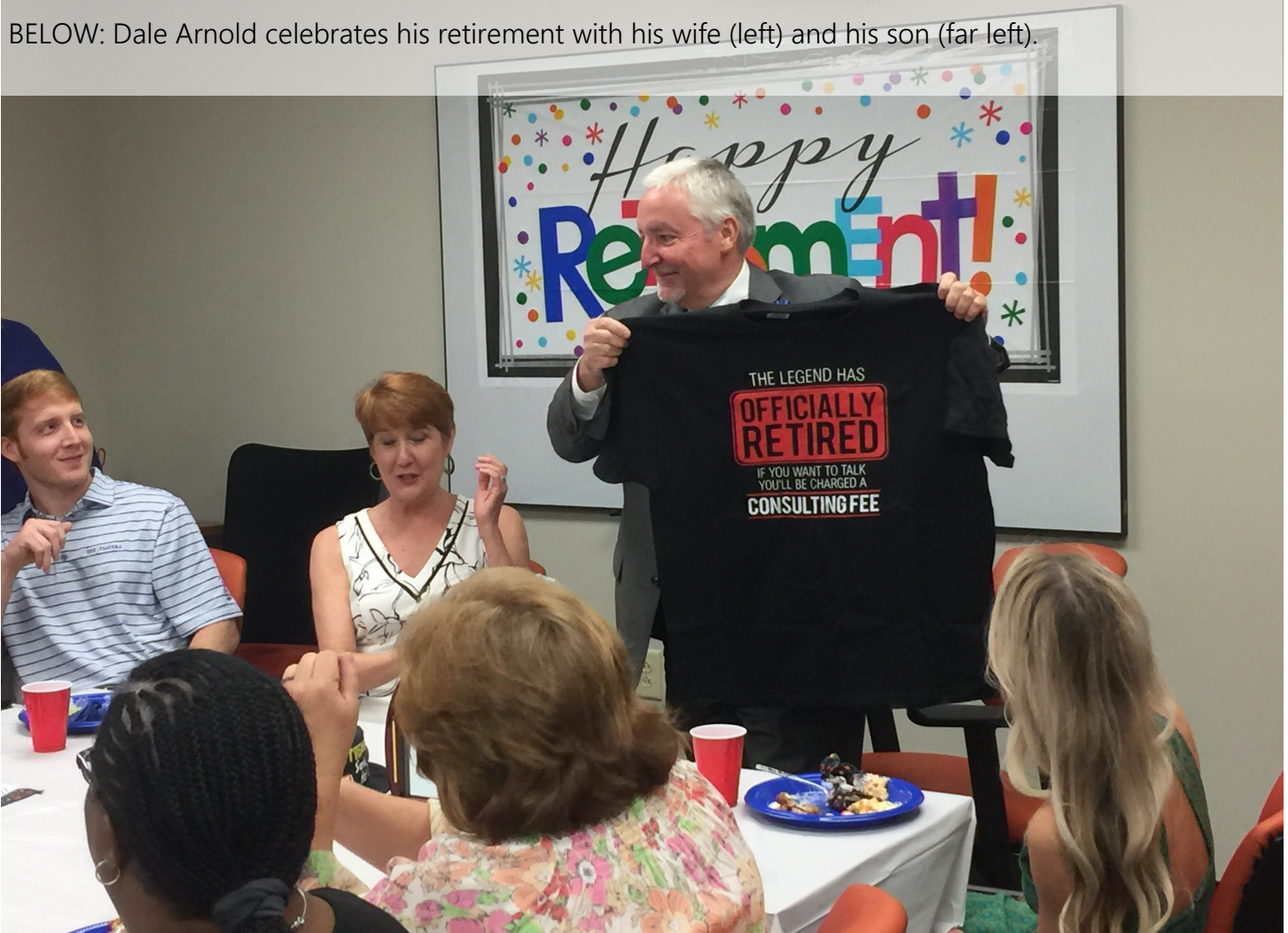


TOP LEFT: Dale Arnold and Executive Director Sean T. Casey at Dale's retirement celebration.



TOP RIGHT: (From left) Jennifer Howell, Ann Heeth, Dale Arnold, Lauri Tuten and Julie O'Connor pose during Dale's retirement party.

BELOW: Dale Arnold celebrates his retirement with his wife (left) and his son (far left).



DAS Employee of the Month

Congrats to Sharon Williams

Nomination by Dianna Scherer

I received a phone call from a claimant saying that she had spoken to Ms. Sharon Williams about a dozen times in the course of completing her claim. She said that Ms. Williams had been unfailingly kind and helpful. The claimant repeatedly expressed her appreciation for the customer service she had received from Ms. Williams. How often do we get this type of feedback? It's very rare. This is just one example of the customer service Ms. Williams routinely provides her claimants.

Ms. Williams' dedication to providing excellent customer service is truly appreciated!



A Grand Slam

GVRA Client Honored at Suntrust Park

By Career Specialist for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing Courtney Pruitt

I am pleased to announce that my client, Christopher Humeston, has been honored through his employer as a recipient of the April 2018 Diamond Honoree for the Atlanta Braves at Suntrust Park in Atlanta.

Christopher has been a client with Vocational Rehabilitation since 2015. He worked through Supported Employment and was placed on a job in 2017 as a member of the kitchen crew at Suntrust Park.

Christopher is both Deaf and was diagnosed with Cerebral Palsy at birth. His determination has inspired every person with whom he has worked both at Suntrust

Park and Vocational Rehabilitation. Christopher was honored with the award on Tuesday, June 26th, prior to the start of the Braves game that night.

I could not be any more proud of him for the special award that he has received. This was made possible because of the staff who have worked closely with him. I want to thank everyone for their dedication in helping my Deaf and Hard of Hearing clients become successful in what they do. Christopher has been a great example for our community, showing them that people with disabilities DO have the ABILITY to work hard for what they want to accomplish.



STEM Camp

Making Math and Science Cool

By Assistant Director of Deaf Services Jared Patton

The annual Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM) camp hosted by the Georgia Center for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing (GCDHH) had a total of 17 attendees this year.

GCDHH partnered with Georgia State University to host this camp from June 11 to June 15, with student presentations making up the final day. Most of the students were between the ages of 15 years old and 19 years old and are currently in high schools where they will be entering junior and senior years this fall. These students are all Deaf and Hard of Hearing who were given an opportunity to learn about potential careers for their future. Here are some of their experiences this year.

A young lady attended STEM camp with plans to become a carpenter in 2017, came back again this year and has decided to major in the engineering field.

A first time camper who attended public school was able to express during the presentations that he feels that he finally

belonged in a group since there are no other Deaf/Hard of Hearing students at his high school.

Another first-time STEM camp attendee was thrilled to be staying in the dormitory because it was his first experience away from home when he wasn't staying with relatives. He stated that he has experienced what it's like to be "on his own" during the week-long STEM camp. He is currently preparing to attend National Technical Institute on Deafness in New York when he graduates.

As such, I'd like to congratulate these young men and women who have dreams and aspirations. I am encouraged to watch the students begin to see beyond what is currently in front of them. GCDHH expects to have another camp in 2019, giving Deaf and Hard of Hearing young folks an opportunity to realize their limitless potential.



Change your life!

Start Your GVRA Referral Today.

Call the GIB Referral Hotline.

1.888.226.3444

Calendar of Events

Empowering Young Adults
Locating Employment Avenues through Peer Support
Summer Program 2018
June 18-July 26
1901 Montreal Road, Suite 102
Tucker, GA 30084

Children's Healthcare of Atlanta - Camp No Limb-itations
July 22-27
210 S. Broad Street , Unit 5
Winder, GA 30680

OSI Chat and Chew
July 24 at Noon
200 Piedmont Ave.
Atlanta, GA 30334

Georgia Rehabilitation Association
(SRC meeting is Aug. 6 and 7)
August 6-8
Savannah Marriott Waterfront
100 General McIntosh Blvd.
Savannah, GA 31401

BEP Training Conference
August 10 and 11
Hilton Atlanta Northeast
5993 Peachtree Industrial Blvd.
Peachtree Corners, GA 30092

NAAAP Diversity Career Fair
August 23-25
InterContinental Buckhead Atlanta
3315 Peachtree Road Northeast
Atlanta, GA 30326

GVRA Leadership Summit
September 17 through September 19
Savannah, GA
Location Details Coming Soon



Gone Camping!

Friends Helping Friends Awards Scholarship

By GVRS Board Secretary Sandy Adams

Friends Helping Friends Club, Inc. recently awarded a summer camp scholarship for 2018 Elbert County Comprehensive High School (ECCHS) graduate Salona Allen to travel to North Dakota where she learned about the Lakota native culture as she continues her 4-H internship traveling to 14 states learning about a variety of work experiences. Christi Duncan, Georgia Vocational Rehabilitation Agency (GVRA) VR Career Specialist at ECCHS, encouraged Salona to enhance her knowledge base by participating in opportunities available to her through the extension office.

Salona began working with the UGA Elbert County extension office through Great Promise Partnership (GPP) during her senior year at ECCHS. Through this partnership between ECCHS, VR, the extension office, GPP and FHF, she was given opportunities to be involved with many wonderful interactive projects and trips.

Several organizations proudly partner to provide Elbert County students successfully proven tools essential for job training experiences. Friends Helping Friends Club (FHF), Inc. donated over \$40,000 in the past year, to assist Elbert County Schools providing students overcoming special challenges, with educational opportunities including school trips, special events, summer camps, school supplies for special education teachers and students, sensory motor development school equipment, FHF Scholarships, etc. (at no cost to the students served or to the school system).

GVRA provides a Career Specialist/Christi Duncan at ECCHS via the new VR pilot program assisting students facing special

challenges in their pursuit of pre-employment transition opportunities. UGA Extension is a county, state and federal funded organization supported by specialists in the University of Georgia's College of Agricultural and Environmental Sciences and the College of Family and Consumer Sciences. Georgia 4-H, the largest youth program in the state, helps over 170,000 students in grades 5-12 develop many workforce skills including leadership, decision-making, record keeping, public speaking and teamwork as they explore projects in health, science, agriculture and the arts.

GPP is a public-private partnership that empowers and equips students to complete high school while gaining real-world job skills and experience, creating a path to personal success and the workforce of the future.

Engaging with GPP offers Georgia employers an opportunity to address the critical need of recruiting and developing the next generation of workforce talent. The program works with students, with the promise that if they will continue their education, GPP will support their efforts and help them prepare for further education, military service or the workforce after graduation.

Working together these non-profit organizations are available to assist Elbert County students in providing enrichment educational experiences equipping them with skills essential for a successful future.



Plan Completed

Next Year's Strategic Plan is In the Books

The Office of Strategy & Innovation (OSI) is happy to announce that it has completed the agency Strategic Plan for 2018-19 before the deadline of June 30, 2018. In addition, it also completed its internal goal of completing all five program strategic plans, which includes VR, RWS, DAS, BEP and GIB. A copy of the strategic plan will be posted on the website once the plan has been approved by the Office of Planning

and Budget (OPB).

The OSI is also charged with collecting data for the agency Performance Measures due to OPB in August. The OSI staff has already contacted program leaders to advise of the deadline for submission to ensure this information is submitted as quickly as possible.

In Memoriam

Remembering RWS' Frank Ruzycki

Longtime member of the Roosevelt Warm Springs family, former director Frank Ruzycki, has died at the age of 71. Frank oversaw RWS from 1986 - 2005 during a time of immense growth. Previously, he served as RWS's Deputy Director. Today, the Ruzycki Center for Therapeutic Recreation at RWS is a lasting symbol of his legacy and his unwavering commitment to the needs, interests and inclusion of people with disabilities.

Mr. Ruzycki was born in Meriden, CT on July 22, 1946, the son of Frank Ruzycki and Helen Szymaszek Ruzycki. While away from work, he enjoyed golfing, fishing, family beach trips, and a good Martini. His favorite pastime was enjoying his four grandsons. He and Judy never missed an opportunity to cheer on the boys in each and every school activity, proudly armed with his video camera to capture every moment. Mr. Ruzycki was preceded in death by his parents and two brothers, Paul Ruzycki and David Ruzycki.

He is survived by his wife of 50 years, Judy

Ruzycki, of Pine Mountain; two daughters, Jill (Richard) Cook, of Peachtree City, GA and Jenny (Rick) McKibben, of Hamilton, GA; four grandchildren, Jay McKibben, Ross McKibben, Connor Cook, and Cason Cook; and his sister, Bonnie Hubbard, of Meriden, CT. The family hopes Frank, also known by loved ones as "BUDA" will be remembered for his sense of humor, big heartedness, a big believer in hugs and his lifelong desire to serve and support persons with disabilities.

In lieu of flowers, the family requests that contributions be made to the Frank Ruzycki Benevolent Fund, C/O First People's Bank, P.O. Box 89, Hamilton, GA 31811. The family will use the fund to support local charity organizations to continue Frank's acts of kindness and goodwill.



Happy Trails

RWS' Kim Mitcham Retires

By RWS Archivist Mike Shadix

Family and friends gathered in Roosevelt Hall Atrium on June 25 to wish Kim Mitcham a fond farewell on her retirement after 28 years of service with the State of Georgia. Mitcham, a Meriwether County native, has held a variety of positions at Roosevelt Warm Springs (RWS), starting as a nursing aide while still a high school student. Later, as a Licensed Professional Nurse, she worked in the Spinal Cord Injury Unit.

Mitcham received her RN in 1986, working first at Upson Regional Hospital and then at West Georgia Medical Center before returning to RWS in 1993 to serve as Director of Nursing Education.

In 2002, Mitcham accepted a position with the Meriwether County Health Department, but she returned to RWS once again in 2008 to serve as clinical nurse educator for the rehabilitation hospital and the long term acute care hospital. She became nurse manager for student health services in 2013.

"As nurse manager, Kim served on various committees and planning teams to support a new student program model that focused on maximizing independence," said RWS

Director and now interim Vocational Services Director Lee Brinkley Bryan. "Her leadership contributed to new pharmacy services on campus that have increased student independence and reduced the cost of student medications by thousands of dollars each month."

"She has also overseen the implementation of new processes and student training modules that have increased their health knowledge and raised the number of students achieving independence in self-medication to its highest level," Bryan continued.

"I once read," Bryan concluded, "that success means we go to sleep at night knowing that our talents were used in a way that served others. Kim, you have achieved this success at RWS. We appreciate your talents, and most of all we appreciate who you are as a professional, as a person and as a friend."

Kim will be getting married soon, and the couple intends to do as much travelling as possible. They plan to make their home in the Atlanta area.



Cheers to the Graduates

Majority of RWS Class Already Employed

By Communications and Marketing Director Robin Folsom

51%. It's enough to win an election. It's enough to pass some types of Bills through the U.S. Senate. And it's enough to afford bragging rights to the staff of Roosevelt Warm Springs (RWS) and, most importantly, to the June graduating class of 2018, of which 51% is already employed.

Donning caps and gowns, 54 students crossed the stage in the campus's historic auditorium. They had earned a number of professionally recognized certifications, including Computer Numeric Control, Certified Nursing Assistance, and Customer Service, among others.

In a custom established two years ago, a returning former student issued the charge to graduates. Britton Kirkland, of Hahira, now works at Publix in Valdosta, but his goal is to complete the manager's program and climb the company ladder.

"Before I came to Roosevelt Warm Springs, I had never been on my own before, but I felt quite at home, and I adapted quickly," he said. "I want to see all of this year's graduates believe they can do anything they set their minds to as well."

Delivering the keynote speech, GVRA Executive Director Sean Casey reminded the graduates of three things no one could ever take away from them: their education, their knowledge, and their principles.

"While education and certifications are wonderful, and you can never have enough knowledge, your principles are perhaps the most important of the three," he said, addressing the packed auditorium from the stage. "They are, to rest on a cliché, who you are when no one is looking. They may

come from your faith, your upbringing, or just a place deep inside you, that tells you what's right from wrong. Regardless, never betray your principles. They are the most precious thing you can carry with you, and the thing that will guide you when life throws you hard times."

Following the ceremony, hundreds of graduates, family, friends, and RWS staff gathered in Roosevelt Hall for a reception, complete with punch, cake and ice cream. Alexander Weber, surrounded by his family, paused to reflect on his time at the center and what he believes was his most valuable take-away. "I have learned that there's a lot of things you have to go through in order to identify and narrow down your skill sets," Alexander said. "You have to work through some of the more mundane things in order to reach your full potential."

Dr. Lee Brinkley-Bryan, who oversees GVRA Residential Services, including Roosevelt Warm Springs and Cave Spring Center, said she was moved by the accomplishments of the graduating class. She offered them a few words of advice.

"Continue working hard. I think one of the things that one of the things that's evident when you talk to the graduates is that they recognize the goals they've reached. They have come to appreciate the value and power of good people in your corner. They've also learned to appreciate those that offer knowledge or just simple guidance about life. Don't forget that the people who are there to help you make a difference, and you can continue to reach your goals."



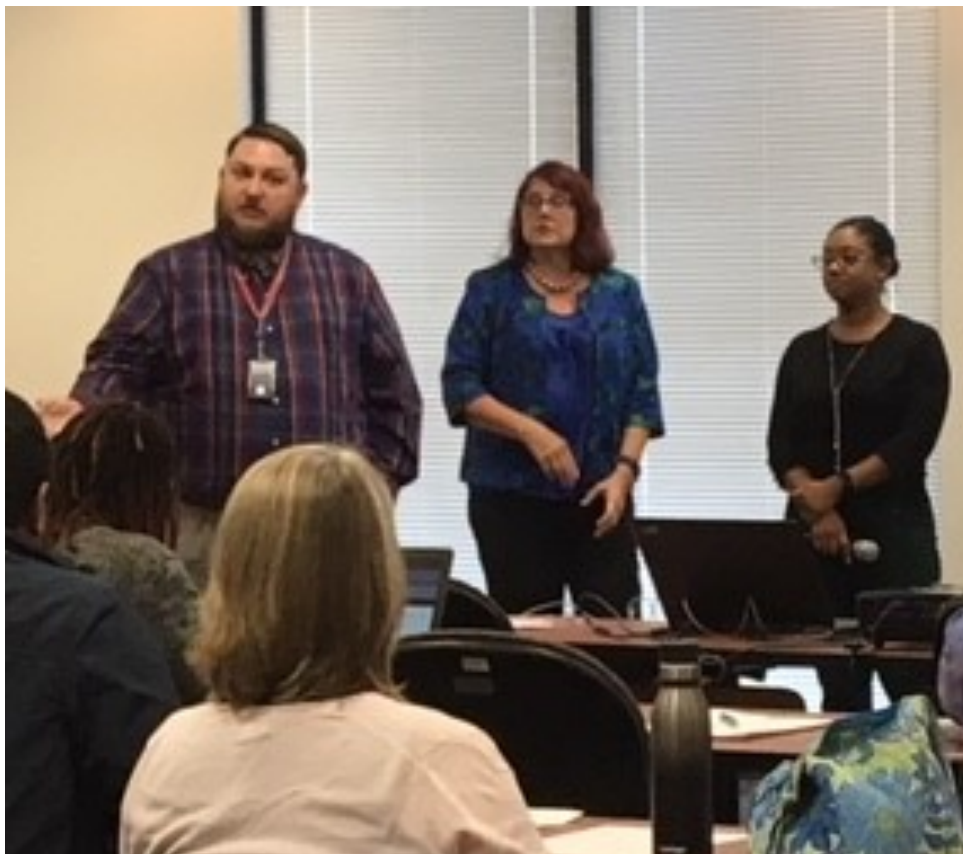
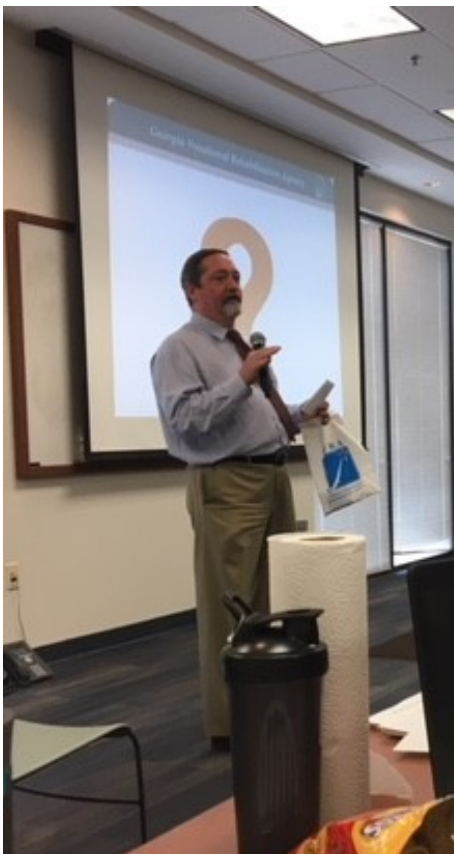


ABOVE: GVRA Executive Director Sean Casey gives the keynote address at the Roosevelt Warm Springs June 2018 graduation.



Training Day

Scenes From Supported Employment Training



A series of six supported employment trainings were recently held around the state. These trainings were a collaborative effort of Support Services and the Policy Unit to respond to requests from the field for more information about supported employment. Most locations were filled to capacity with great participation. Each training was opened by a Respect Institute speaker, an individual with lived experience who shared their story.



With a Little Help

A GVRA Success Story

By Rehabilitation Casework Associate Debbie Howard

Nicholas Welch was a fifth year senior at Rabun County High School when he became a Vocational Rehabilitation client in 2016. He was referred by his teachers, Wen Copeland and Jessica Streetman.

Nicholas is a sweet, well-mannered young man who happens to have been born with Down syndrome. Due to his disability, Nicholas' abilities and strengths are underestimated by people when they first meet him. But Nicholas proved the naysayers wrong.

He would go to his Career-Based Vocational Instruction (CBVI) sites to perform daily tasks with minimal supervision. Not only would he perform the janitorial duties like sweeping, dusting and stocking, but he was also the go-to-guy to build anything that was needed—chairs, shelves and tables.

RCWA Debbie Howard and Nicholas developed a work plan with a vocational goal that allowed him to stay in Rabun County with his family. After completing a Goodwill work evaluation, Lisa Dunn, employment consultant for the Rabun area, assisted in getting him Community Work Adjustment Training (CWAT) in the lunchroom at Rabun County Primary School. During this time, Nicholas was given job aides to assist him in performing his duties in the cafeteria. After only one month of working with job aides and fantastic job coaching by Danielle at Goodwill, Nicholas was offered a part-time job as a lunchroom worker at the primary school.

When not working in the lunchroom, Nicholas likes to read to the third graders or use his walkie talkie to help others around the school.

Nicholas has been the ideal client! He was open to trying all the services developed for his plan, stayed in contact with those on his team and had great family support. All of these factors worked together to make Nicholas the success story he is today!



Chairman Emeritus

Former GVRS Chairman Honored



In an historic move, the Georgia Vocational Rehabilitation Services (GVRS) Board has named its first Chairman Emeritus. James N. DeFoor, known to his many friends and colleagues across the rehabilitation community as Jimmy, was also the Board's first Chairman, serving from its inception in 2012. He was instrumental in the drafting of the legislation that created the Georgia Vocational Rehabilitation Agency (GVRA), which today has around 1,400 employees whose mission is to promote career and living independence for people with disabilities.

At the most recent Board meeting on Wednesday, July 11, DeFoor's successor, Chairman Tom Wilson, called for a motion to bestow the honor. The Board's vote of approval was unanimous. Chairman Wilson then presented DeFoor with a resolution from the Office of Governor Nathan Deal.

Wilson said, "I have been blessed to call Jimmy a friend for many years and a close friend over the past six years. I've always known him to be a person of great integrity with a servant's heart and much accumulated wisdom from a Vocational Rehabilitation career at all levels. It was a great honor to collaborate with him in the formation of Georgia Vocational Rehabilitation Agency and the establishment of the GVRS Board, which he led with the same commitment to service excellence. I look forward to his ongoing contributions as Chairman Emeritus." During the 2012 legislative process, current GVRA Executive Director Sean T. Casey also worked closely with DeFoor.

"His leadership and support has meant more to me than I can express," Casey said. "Few people have the level of commitment to the employment and independence of people with disabilities that Chairman Emeritus DeFoor exhibits. I have been honored to serve with him, learn from him, and we are thrilled that we will still have his guidance and his presence in our GVRA family."

Prior to his Board tenure, DeFoor served in Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) for 34 years, retiring in 2002 as VR Program Director. He held numerous other roles, including District Director, Unit Supervisor, and Rehabilitation Counselor.

Below is the full text of the resolution:

In special recognition of distinguished service to the Georgia Vocational Rehabilitation Services (GVRS) Board of Directors, the GVRS Board wishes to



acknowledge James N. DeFoor, by the following RESOLUTION that,

WHEREAS Chairman DeFoor began his long and honorable career in 1969 as a Rehabilitation Counselor with the Georgia Division of Rehabilitation Services, and

WHEREAS Chairman DeFoor faithfully and with distinction served Georgia's citizens with disabilities in this capacity for many years, and

WHEREAS Chairman DeFoor quickly earned promotions as Unit Supervisor, District Director and Vocational Rehabilitation Program Director demonstrating integrity, selflessness and charm, and

WHEREAS Chairman DeFoor was selected on his merits to become Deputy Director and then Director of Rehabilitation Services under the Department of Labor, and

WHEREAS Chairman DeFoor retired from that position on May 31, 2002 after 34 years of service to persons with disabilities in Georgia, and

WHEREAS Chairman DeFoor has demonstrated a life-long passion for helping Georgians with disabilities obtain competitive, integrated employment; and

WHEREAS, Chairman DeFoor was integral to the passage of legislation that created GVRA, previously a department under the Georgia Department of Labor; and

WHEREAS, Chairman DeFoor established the GVRS Board and served as its first Chairman from its inception in 2012.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED by the GVRS Board that in recognition of the distinguished service and exemplary contributions to the field of rehabilitation, the Board hereby grants the title of CHAIRMAN EMERITUS to James N. DeFoor.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that this Resolution is spread upon the permanent minutes of this Board and that a copy shall be given to James N. DeFoor.

Your Newsletter

As always, I want to use this space to thank everyone who contributed to this month's newsletter. It's a premier publication for an organization our size, and it wouldn't be possible without those who help guide its content.

With that in mind, I want to extend the invitation to everyone reading this to submit

www.gvs.ga.gov

 [Twitter.com/gavocrehab](https://twitter.com/gavocrehab)

 [Facebook.com/gavocrehab](https://facebook.com/gavocrehab)

By Communications Manager John Boan

stories or pictures or whatever you think might make a good addition to the newsletter.

If you have any ideas, please email me at john.boan@gvs.ga.gov. Thanks as always for everything you do, and my office door is always open (I'm in a cube).

Printed at Roosevelt Warm Springs

